

Understandably, U.S. policies towards Sri Lanka have focused on accountability for what happened during the last phases of the civil war as well as on steps toward reconciliation efforts that seek inclusion of former terrorist enemies into the democratic process. While these aspects are very important and deserving of support, I believe there is the opportunity to engage in a wider approach at the same time that takes into account economic and geostrategic considerations. Maybe a wider approach would have a positive influence overall.

I have expressed these points recently in correspondence to Secretary Kerry, urging him to undertake at the Department of State a review of our current policies towards Sri Lanka to ensure that we not only encourage continued reconciliation that includes political transparency especially in the upcoming election in the north but also recognize Sri Lanka's potential to be a strong financial and national security ally in the future.

Secretary Kerry has replied agreeing with me that promising economic growth is occurring in Sri Lanka after years of terrorist insurgency, and that this country can play a significant geopolitical role in U.S. strategic security interests in South Asia and the Indian Ocean. The State Department, however, points out that Sri Lanka still needs to achieve "meaningful reconciliation between the Sinhala majority and Tamil and Muslim minorities."

I take the State Department at its word, and believe the upcoming September 7 Provincial Council elections in the north can be a meaningful act of reconciliation between the Sinhala majority and Tamil Muslim minorities. And if they are deemed to be conducted in a free and fair manner, I will renew my request to Secretary Kerry to reassess our current policies towards Sri Lanka.

TRIBUTE TO ROBERT MARTIN, TUSKEGEE AIRMAN

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to recognize the remarkable service of Robert Martin, who has spent his life overcoming racial barriers and giving back to his country through extraordinary military and public service.

Born and raised in Dubuque, IA, Mr. Martin, in his youth and throughout his life, demonstrated an exceptional commitment to academics, athletics, and community service. He participated in Boy Scouts despite threats and backlash from fellow scouts' parents. He was also ultimately inducted into the Dubuque Senior High School Athletic Hall of Fame. He graduated from Iowa State University earning a degree in electrical engineering and obtained a pilot's license.

Mr. Martin, while still in college, applied to join the U.S. Army Air Corps and was accepted after he was drafted into service. He began his military ca-

reer in Fort Dodge, but was transferred to Tuskegee, AL, to train in the Army's Black pilot program, where he received the rank of commissioned second lieutenant and specialized in operating the AT-6 Texan and the P-40 War Hawk. He then, in 1944, became an active fighter pilot in Italy, conducting over 60 long-range combat missions as part of the 100th Fighter Squadron. His squadron defended B-17 Flying Fortresses from German assaults. On March 3, 1945, he was shot down by ground fire in Yugoslavia. He parachuted from his burning plane and successfully avoided German capture with the help of Yugoslavian partisans. Upon his recovery, he returned to the U.S. and was honorably discharged.

After being discharged, Mr. Martin continued to serve in the Army Air Corps Reserves, rising to the rank of captain. Following his military career, he maintained a commitment to public service, serving as an engineer for Cook County, IL. He was also a leader in Tuskegee Airmen, Inc., an organization whose members travel the country as educators and historians.

Mr. Martin was awarded a number of accolades for his service, including the Distinguished Flying Cross, a Purple Heart, an Air Medal with six Oak Leaf Clusters, and, in 2007, the Congressional Gold Medal. Moreover, he was inducted into the Iowa Aviation Hall of Fame and presented the George Washington Carver Medal from Simpson College, which recognizes individuals who have served as an inspiration to others; demonstrated leadership and conviction; advanced the fields of science, education, the arts, or religion; and dedicated themselves to addressing humanitarian issues. Mr. Martin's record exemplifies the extraordinary military service African Americans performed and the dedication that they displayed for their country in spite of the prejudice they experienced.

Robert Martin is a remarkable citizen, truly deserving of his many decorations and my gratitude. I wish him and his family all the best and thank him and all the Tuskegee Airmen for their steadfast service.

CONSULTATION REQUEST

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that my letter dated June 10, 2013, to the minority leader be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

U.S. SENATE,

Washington, DC, June 10, 2013.

Hon. MITCH MCCONNELL,
Senate Minority Leader, U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR MCCONNELL: I am requesting that I be consulted before the Senate enters into any unanimous consent agreements or time limitations regarding H.R. 180, National Blue Alert Act of 2013.

I support the goals of this legislation and believe suspects who seriously injure or kill federal, state or local law enforcement offi-

cers in the line of duty should be apprehended as quickly as possible. However, I believe the responsibility to address this issue, as it relates to state and local law enforcement officers, lies with the states and local communities that these brave law enforcement officers serve. Furthermore, while I do not believe this issue is the responsibility of the federal government; if Congress does act, we can and must do so in a fiscally responsible manner. My concerns are included in, but not limited to, those outlined in this letter.

While this bill is well-intentioned, it will likely cost the American people several million dollars over 5 years without corresponding offsets. I recognize this bill no longer contains the authorization included in prior versions of this legislation; however, establishing a new program which requires the Department of Justice (DOJ) to carry out additional responsibilities, even if implemented by existing staff, is not free of future costs. In examining last year's National Blue Alert Act of 2012 (H.R. 365), the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimated the DOJ would incur an additional \$5 million over 5 years solely in administrative costs to operate the Blue Alert system. As this legislation made no changes from the 2012 bill, it is safe to assume those costs will recur.

It is irresponsible for Congress to jeopardize the future standard of living of our children by borrowing from future generations. The U.S. national debt is now over \$16.7 trillion. That means over \$53,000 in debt for each man, woman and child in the United States. A year ago, the national debt was \$15.7 trillion. Despite pledges to control spending, Washington adds billions to the national debt every single day. In just one year, our national debt has grown by \$1 trillion or 6.4%.

In addition to these fiscal concerns, there are several problems specific to this legislation. First, there is no need to establish a national Blue Alert system because many states have already developed their own Blue Alert programs for the same purposes outlined in this bill, including alerts issued for the injury or death of federal, as well as state and local law enforcement officers. In 2008, Florida and Texas were the first states to establish these programs. Fourteen additional states soon followed—Oklahoma, Maryland, Georgia, Delaware, California, Virginia, Mississippi, Tennessee, Utah, Colorado, South Carolina, Washington, Kentucky, and Ohio. This year, in July and October, respectively, Indiana and Connecticut will begin their Blue Alert systems. Several state legislatures currently have legislation pending that would establish a Blue Alert system, including Minnesota, Illinois and Alabama.

Furthermore, there is no data to support the success of any of the existing state Blue Alert programs. Oklahoma established its Blue Alert system in 2009, but it is not yet fully functional. The last five states to establish an alert system did so just last year. As a result, not only have states already established their own programs, but from the limited use of the existing systems, there is no clear evidence of a substantial need for a Blue Alert system, or of the consistent, successful apprehension of suspects as a direct result of a Blue Alert. If anything, we should wait for these programs to produce results that can be examined and determine whether this type of system is useful before instituting a federal one-size-fits-all program.

Second, while the bill's supporters likely envision pursuing suspects who have injured or killed a law enforcement officer in a routine traffic stop or while fleeing a crime scene, for example, the bill's definition of "law enforcement officer" is much broader.